

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Wildfire and Disaster Awareness Day in Wrightwood"

On Saturday May 9, 2009 San Bernardino Animal Care and Control will be participating in the 6th annual Wildfire & Disaster Awareness Day held in Wrightwood from 10 am - 3 pm. In California, we are accustomed to planning for disasters such as earthquakes, fires and floods; although we hope it will not happen to us. If you are a pet owner, you need to make sure you have included your pets in your emergency preparations. Of course, different disasters will require different responses, but, in any case, you may have to evacuate your home. The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program offers pet owners the following tips for keeping pets safe during an emergency situation.

- If you must leave, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to take them with you. Leaving pets behind, even if you try to create a safe place for them, is likely to result in them being injured, lost or worse — killed.
- Devise a plan on where you will take your pet during an emergency. Keep in mind that Red Cross disaster shelters are not allowed to accept pets because of health and safety regulations and other considerations. Service animals that assist people with disabilities are the **ONLY** animals allowed in Red Cross shelters. Contact hotels and motels outside of your immediate area to find out about their policies on accepting pets. Ask friends and relatives if they would be able to provide shelter for your pets during a disaster. Prepare a list of boarding facilities and veterinarians who could provide temporary shelter for your pets. You should not rely on animal shelters to provide emergency shelter for your pets because many of them are already overcrowded.
- You should also assemble a pet supply kit that includes your pet's medications, medical records, leashes, carriers, and trailers for safe transportation, current photographs of your pets in case they get lost, food, portable water, bowls, cat litter/pan, can opener, pet beds, toys, halters, feeding schedules, a pet first aid kit, flashlight, blanket, and the name and phone number of your veterinarian.
- Make sure that your pet always wears a collar with up-to-date identification. Microchips and tattoos are also a good idea, since collars can come off. You should also consider placing a pet alert sticker on an outside window to alert emergency workers to the presence of pets in your home, just in case you are not there when disaster strikes. You can obtain these stickers for free by visiting the San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program's website at www.sbcounty.gov/acc (go to Disaster Preparedness Link and click on Disaster Preparedness for Your Pets)

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If you have the chance please come out and take advantage of the many different types of information available at this annual event. If you have questions or would like more information about disaster preparedness for your pets, please contact the San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program toll free at 1-800-472-5609.

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